



NORTH WALES TALES

## The Two Dragons of Dinas Emrys

Dinas Emrys, North Wales

Long ago, on a rocky, wooded hill near Beddgelert in Gwynedd, a king wanted to build a tower.

The hill stood high above the Glaslyn valley, looking down on the calm water of Llyn Dinas. All around rose the mountains of Snowdonia. "Here," said the king. "Build my tower right here."

So the builders carried heavy stones up the steep slope. They worked all day and laid the walls strong and tall.

But in the morning, the walls had fallen down.

They built again. And again. Every single night, the stones tumbled into a heap. The king grew worried, for he could not understand it at all.

A boy named Emrys lived nearby. He was small and quiet, but he noticed things that grown-ups missed. He climbed the hill and pressed his ear to the cold ground.

"Listen," he said. "There is something underneath."

The builders dug. Down and down they went, until they found a hidden pool deep inside the hill. And in the pool slept two dragons, curled up tight. One was red. One was white.

Every night, while the world was dark, the two dragons woke and wrestled. They rolled and tumbled and bumped the roof of their cave, and that was why the tower kept falling down.

"Poor things," said Emrys softly. "They are squashed in there. No wonder they are so cross."

The white dragon huffed a cloud of frost. The red dragon puffed a curl of smoke. They were tired and grumpy and far too big for their little pool.

Emrys was not afraid. He knelt at the water's edge and spoke gently, the way you might speak to a frightened pony.

"You don't have to fight," he said. "There is plenty of room for both of you up there." And he pointed to the wide sky above Snowdonia, where the wind was fresh and the mountains went on for ever.

The dragons blinked. They had never once thought of leaving. The little pool was all they knew.

Emrys held out his hand. "Come and see," he said.

Slowly, the red dragon uncurled. Slowly, the white dragon stretched. Together they climbed up through the hole the builders had made, out into the morning light. They opened their great wings.

Then up they flew, the red one and the white one, side by side, looping over Llyn Dinas and away across the valley. They were not fighting now. They were dancing.

The king watched with his mouth wide open. "Build the tower now," said Emrys. "The hill will hold it. The dragons have gone to play in the sky."

And so they did. This time the walls stayed up.

The king turned to the boy. "What is your name?"

"Emrys," he said.

"Then this hill shall carry your name for ever," said the king. "Dinas Emrys. Emrys's city."

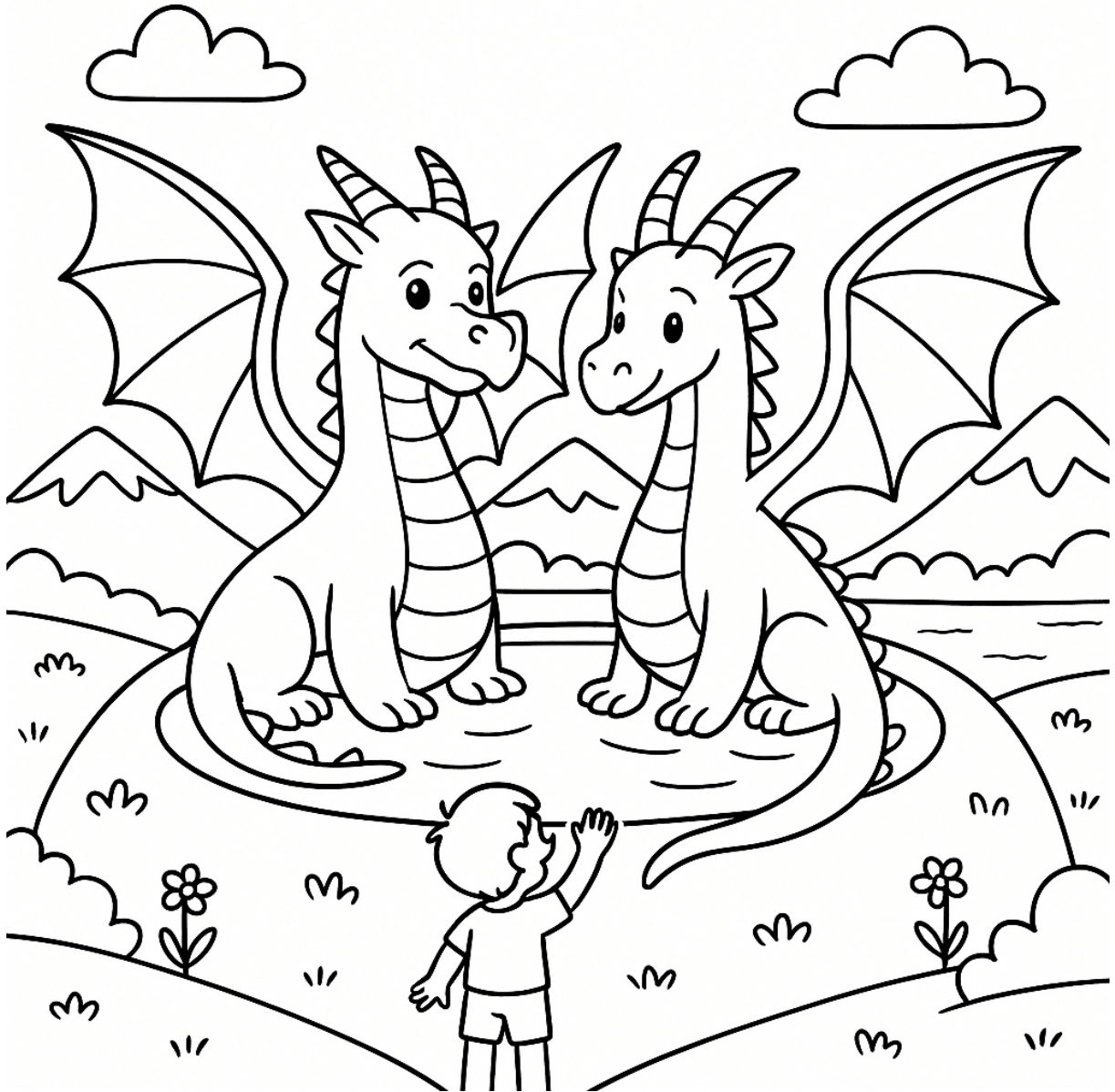
And that is the name it still has today, the rocky green hill above the lake, where two dragons once slept and a quiet boy was brave enough to set them free.

(Some say a real castle was built on that very hill, long after. But the dragons? Well. That part is just a story.)

## What's real?

- Dinas Emrys is a rocky, wooded hill near Beddgelert in Gwynedd, north-west Wales, and its Welsh name means 'Emrys's city'.
- Dinas Emrys rises about 76 metres (250 feet) above the floor of the Glaslyn river valley in Snowdonia.
- Dinas Emrys overlooks the southern end of the lake called Llyn Dinas in Snowdonia.
- An Iron Age hillfort once stood at Dinas Emrys, and today you can still see its stone ramparts and the base of a keep.
- Some believe the castle at Dinas Emrys was built by Llewelyn the Last to guard the road to the mountain pass of Snowdon.

Now colour it in!



Print this page and bring The Two Dragons of Dinas Emrys to life with your colours.